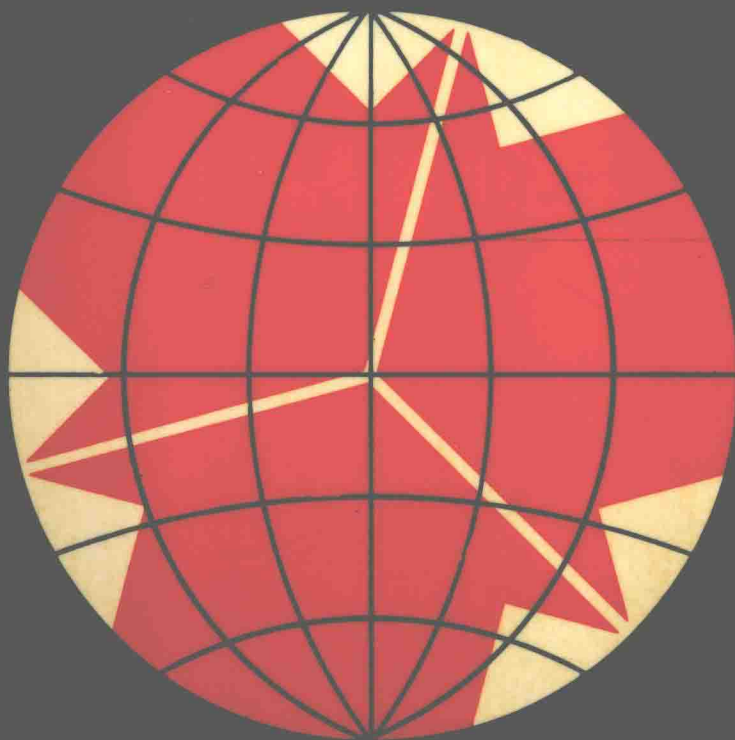


# THE TWENTIETH- CENTURY WORLD



An International History

William R. Keylor

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WILLIAM R. KEYLOR

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To Daniel and Justine  
From a Loving Father

# Preface

This study was conceived to meet a need that had been acutely felt by its author throughout a decade of teaching college-level courses dealing with the history of international relations in the modern period. There is no dearth of serviceable textbooks treating the foreign relations of a particular nation or region during the twentieth century. These were evidently composed to accommodate traditional survey courses, such as "The History of American Foreign Relations," "European Diplomatic History," "The Middle East and World Politics," and the like. But an increasing number of historians of international relations have recently expressed dissatisfaction with the limitations inherent in an exclusively national or regional approach to their subject. They have begun to insist that the sovereign political units or regional subsystems of the modern world are all so closely linked, so profoundly interdependent, as to require a global or international perspective on the part of those who study the external relations of states. Evidence of this new attitude is pervasive: Courses entitled "World History" or "International History" have proliferated in undergraduate curricula; professional organizations and scholarly journals have sprouted to promote research in the history of international relations from this broader perspective; perhaps most important of all, there has appeared a vast and growing body of specialized scholarship, built up in the course of the past decade or so, that has transcended the narrowly national or regional approach to the study of the relations between and among states over time. Profiting from the declassification of previously inaccessible government archives in a number of countries, the authors of these recent monographs and partial syntheses have profoundly affected our understanding of the international developments of the twentieth century, overturning or revising judgments of earlier works once deemed definitive. Yet, to my knowledge, there exists no college-level textbook that incorporates the findings of these recent specialized studies in a format that is genuinely global or international in scope. This I have attempted to do in the follow-

ing pages, signaling the persistence of sharp scholarly controversies where appropriate and offering personal assessments when confidence in my own firsthand knowledge of the subject seems to warrant them.

The absence of such a textbook is scarcely surprising. One is hard put to imagine a more forbidding enterprise. The writer so presumptuous as to undertake a survey of the entire world of the twentieth century in 400-odd pages promptly acquires the virtue of humility as he confronts the immense corpus of secondary literature on specialized topics far removed from his own particular field of expertise. He learns how utterly dependent he is on the original research of others who have devoted entire careers to the explication of historical developments of which he was either wholly ignorant or only dimly aware.\* As he patiently excavates this largely unfamiliar terrain, he must keep in mind an organizational principle under which to subsume the disparate facts and interpretations gleaned from the secondary sources in order to supply the coherence and intelligibility that a textbook for undergraduates ought to have.

Simply put, my purpose has been to provide a narrative account within an analytical framework of the struggle among the major nations of the world for power, prosperity, and prestige in this century. The major advantage of such a guiding principle is its exclusivity. It permits the author to discount or ignore several categories of topics that often occupy prominent places in history textbooks in order to concentrate on those events and processes that relate to the underlying theme. Thus, for example, little attention is devoted to the internal social, political, or cultural history of individual states. Such domestic developments are addressed only when they acquire significance for the interplay of forces in the international arena. On the other hand, topics that usually pass unnoticed or receive only cursory mention in most "diplomatic history" texts are dealt with at length herein. For instance, I have given substantial coverage to international economic relations, with particular emphasis on trade patterns, capital flows, and competition for raw materials, as well as on the larger connection between these economic forces and the international contest for political and strategic advantage.†

The high degree of selectivity necessitated by a synthetic study of such broad scope is bound to displease specialists in this or that subject that receives less attention than it might be thought to deserve. Stringent limitations of space imposed by an understandably cost-conscious publisher compelled me to abandon plans for three additional chapters intended for inclusion in the second part of this book: One would have traced the formation and transformation of the international economic system since

\* I have attempted to record my immense debt to other scholars in the bibliographical essay which appears at the end of this work.

† Recognizing that certain technical terms of international economics may be unfamiliar to the student, I have included a glossary which should be consulted when such terms are encountered in the text.

1945 as a sequel to the two earlier sections on world commercial and financial relations in the half century before the Second World War. Two others would have extended to the post-1945 period the treatment of Japan's earlier role in East Asia and the position of the United States vis-à-vis its neighbors in the western hemisphere. Rather than according these three important topics the separate analysis they probably warrant, I have resorted to the less-than-ideal (but I trust satisfactory) option of interspersing abbreviated discussions of them throughout the chapters dealing with the Cold War.

A brief explanation is due the reader with respect to my reliance on the customary device of using names of nations or their capital cities to designate the foreign policy-making apparatus of governments. Phrases such as "Great Britain tolerated Japan's expansionist aspirations north of the Yangtze" or "Bonn's search for an accommodation with Warsaw" employ a semantic shorthand for the sake of convenience. It would be tedious to repeat each time what is denoted by these handy labels: the political, economic, and military elites that shape the foreign policies of a state.

The final version of this book reflects the advice and criticism of several friends and colleagues in the Departments of History and Political Science and the Center for International Relations at Boston University. Norman Naimark gave the manuscript a careful reading and rescued it from factual errors and untenable interpretations, especially with respect to Russia and Eastern Europe. Hermann Frederick Eilts also read the entire piece and drew upon his extensive practical as well as scholarly knowledge of the Middle East to enhance my own understanding of that complex region. Dietrich Orlow reviewed the sections dealing with Europe in the interwar period and offered particularly helpful suggestions for improving the treatment of German foreign policy. Roy Glasgow cheerfully shared with me his expertise in the largely unfamiliar subject of Latin American history, calling to my attention several important secondary sources in that field and correcting some of my misconceptions about America's relations with its neighbors to the south. Saul Engelbourg gave careful scrutiny to the subchapters on international economics and offered several suggestions for revision that greatly improved those sections. William Newman helped to guide me toward a firmer grasp of the balance of power in Europe after the Great War. John G. Gagliardo and Arnold A. Offner left their mark on this work in two important ways: first, by serving as models of serious scholarship and dedicated teaching, and second, by engaging me in a decade-long dialogue about many of the issues treated in the following pages. To all of these friends and associates I am grateful.

My affiliation with organizations outside my own institution has enabled me to keep in touch with the work of other scholars of international relations in its formative stages. Professor Jean-Baptiste Duroselle kindly invited me to attend his graduate seminar on the history of international relations at the University of Paris during the 1978–79 academic year, where

I learned a great deal from the presentations of several of his students on a variety of topics. I have also benefited from ongoing access to Stanley Hoffman's Center for European Studies at Harvard University, which has long been an indispensable forum for the presentation of work in progress by advanced graduate students and established scholars alike.

I am indebted to Laura Cabot, Stephen Chapman, James T. Dutton, John Pearson, and Jewel Ubben for their prompt and expert work in the typing of the manuscript and to the Graduate School of Boston University for helping to defray the costs of its preparation. My wife, Dr. Rheta Grenoble Keylor, displayed throughout the entire period of this book's composition her customary patience, forbearance, and good sense when various deadlines (both internally and externally imposed) temporarily upset carefully established schedules of parenting and housework.

*Newton, Massachusetts*  
*April 1983*

W.R.K.



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## **The Twentieth-Century World**



## The Global Context of International Relations at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

### **The Europeanization of the World**

The most salient feature of international relations at the beginning of this century was the extent to which most of the world had come under the direct or indirect domination of a handful of states all located in the same geographical region: that western extension of the Eurasian land mass bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Ural Mountains that we call Europe. The expansion of European power and influence in the world had begun in the sixteenth century, when improvements in the technology of oceanic transportation enabled seafaring adventurers from Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, and France to establish contact with and lay claim to territory on distant continents recently discovered or rediscovered—North and South America, Africa, and Asia. European settlements were subsequently established on the coasts of these exotic lands to facilitate the exploitation of their valuable economic resources, such as the precious metals, sugar, and animal furs of the Americas, the spices of the Far East, and the slave labor of Africa.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the European settler populations in the American hemisphere, their numbers greatly increased by the temptations of a temperate climate and an abundance of arable land, had obtained political independence from their transatlantic colonial masters and were busily engaged in promoting the national unification and economic development of the territory they had inherited or to which they laid claim. The American successor states remained thoroughly Europeanized in the sense that their political institutions, economic practices, religious beliefs, and cultural traditions had been transplanted by the immigrants from Europe who constituted the ruling elites of this region. During the same period the Slavic peoples of European Russia migrated eastward by land into Asiatic Siberia to Europeanize that desolate domain. Finally, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, the power of the principal states of Western Eu-

rope was projected into the Afro-Asian portion of the southern hemisphere that had previously remained beyond the reach of European power. The consequence of this long process of expansion in all directions was the creation, for the first time in history, of a genuinely interlinked and interdependent world with Europe as its focal point. It was at the beginning of our own century that statesmen, diplomats, and military leaders began for the first time to speak of international relations in the global sense to which we have been accustomed ever since.

The explanation for the sudden resurgence of imperial expansion during the second half of the nineteenth century has been hotly debated by historians of the subject. Some have emphasized the role of Western\* commercial interests in seeking overseas markets for industrial production and investment capital as well as raw materials that were in short supply at home. Others have focused on the activities of Christian missionaries who penetrated the interior of the colonial world in search of souls to save, only to require military protection from their home governments when the indigenous nonbelievers violently resisted conversion. Others have seen the prospect of strategic advantage—in the form both of military manpower recruitable from the native population and of bases of operation abroad—as the principal motivating factor for this expansion abroad. Still others stress the role of national pride and the search for national prestige. But whatever the source of the imperialist impulse, its consequence was unmistakable: the extension of European power and influence throughout the southern half of the globe that we today call the “Third World.”

The first two nations to achieve in this way the position of “world power” were Great Britain and France. Both had established coastal footholds along the non-European land masses of the world during the first wave of European imperial expansion: England had disposed of its surplus population during its industrial revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by sending large numbers of its nationals to the inhabitable coastlands of North America, Australia, New Zealand, and southern Africa. To the motley collection of islands and coastal enclaves in Latin America, Africa, and the Pacific that had been acquired by England during this earlier era was added the subcontinent of India, which had come under effective British control by the middle of the nineteenth century. France had added the north African territory of Algeria to the remnants of her seventeenth century empire by the same period.

But it was only after the opening of the Suez Canal (constructed by the French between 1856 and 1869 but brought under British financial control in 1875) that authorities in London and Paris began in earnest to promote the cause of imperial expansion. Henceforth, the sea route running through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal, and the Red Sea into the In-

\* The term “Western” shall be employed in this study to designate that portion of the Northern Hemisphere inhabited primarily by Europeans or immigrants of European stock.

dian Ocean—a much more economical and less dangerous route than the passage around the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa—came to be regarded by Britain's governing class as a "lifeline" to its possessions in Asia. It was indeed a lifeline in one very real sense: Since her transformation from an agricultural to an industrial economy at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Great Britain customarily produced no more than 30 percent of the food consumed by her population and an even smaller proportion of the raw materials required by her industries; since a considerable portion of her imported foodstuffs and industrial raw materials came from her Asian and Pacific possessions (India, Australia, and New Zealand), Britain's very survival seemed to depend on her ability to keep open the sea lanes over which these vital supplies were transported. Moreover, in order to pay for these enormous imports of food and raw materials, Britain's manufactured products had to be assured unimpeded access to their export markets overseas. For both these reasons, it was deemed essential by the ruling elite of Victorian England that control of the sea lanes to the Far East be firmly in British hands. This implied both the preservation of naval domination of the Mediterranean–Suez–Red Sea–Indian Ocean route as well as the establishment of strategically located bases and refueling stations along the way.

By the end of the nineteenth century, this national obsession with protecting the passage to India, East Asia, and Australia had resulted in the acquisition of a long string of islands, coastal enclaves, and their hinterlands along the southern rim of Asia and the east coast of Africa as well as control of the Egyptian land bridge connecting the two continents and its canal linking the seas. These strategically situated outposts of British imperialism—Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and Suez in the Mediterranean; Aden and Somaliland on opposite shores of the Red Sea; Kenya, India, Burma, Malaya, and Singapore along the Indian Ocean basin—enabled this small island nation to obtain and preserve effective control of the largest empire in the history of the world.

A third motivating factor for British imperialism—in addition to the quests for (1) supplies of foodstuffs and raw materials and markets for industrial production and (2) the naval bases and refueling stations to facilitate control of the sea lanes over which these products moved—was the search for undeveloped areas for investment that could absorb the huge amounts of capital that had accumulated in Britain in the form of profits from industrial enterprise. The regions of Africa and Asia that had recently been opened to European penetration were in dire need of investment capital to build the transportation and communication systems that were a prerequisite of economic modernization. In short order the major financial institutions of London began to invest heavily in railroad and road construction, the improvement of ports and harbors, and other ventures undertaken by British firms as part of the preliminary process of colonial development. In this way thousands of British investors were led

to believe that their financial well-being depended on guaranteed markets for capital investment in the empire.

All manner of ideological justifications for the spectacular expansion of British power were advanced by the morally upright Victorians. There was much talk of the solemn responsibility to provide the uncivilized, backward peoples of the colonial world with the fruits of Britain's superior culture, in particular the spiritual inspiration of Christianity and the political benefits of enlightened administration. Altruistic missionaries and idealistic civil servants seem genuinely to have conceived of their role as that of rescuing the indigenous populations of the non-European world from the superstitions of their primitive religions and the barbarity of their native customs. But the self-justifying invocations of the "White Man's Burden" barely concealed the underlying motivation for British colonial expansion, which was primarily economic in nature. Despite the rhetoric of religious conversion and political reform, British colonial policy was designed to leave the preexisting social and cultural arrangements untouched and intact. All that mattered to the government in London was that that imperial system contribute to the efficient operation of the worldwide network of trade and investment upon which (it was thought) Great Britain depended for her economic prosperity if not her national survival.

The reasons for France's acquisition of a colonial empire in the latter part of the nineteenth century are less evident. Self-sufficient in food and far behind Great Britain in industrial development, France was much less dependent on foreign trade for her economic well-being. She had no demonstrable commercial incentive to seek guaranteed markets overseas for manufactured goods she could not produce in sufficient quantity or sources of foodstuffs she did not require. Nor did the French financial community seek colonial outlets for accumulated capital in the manner of the large London banking houses. By and large, that portion of French domestic savings that was invested abroad between 1871 and 1914 went not to distant regions of the Southern Hemisphere but rather to the state treasuries of Southern and Eastern Europe. This was so for two reasons. First, these established governments were presumed, wrongly as it turned out, to afford greater security for investment than more speculative ventures in far-off lands in various stages of political disorganization. More important, the flow of private capital to the developing regions of Eastern Europe was actively promoted by the French government, which, to a far greater degree than its British counterpart, regarded foreign investment as an instrument of diplomacy. If there was no good economic reason for France to covet a colonial empire in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, there was a persuasive diplomatic reason for her to direct her financial resources eastward rather than southward. France's vulnerable position in a Europe dominated by the powerful German Empire that had been formed at her own expense after the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) dictated a perpetual preoccupation with continental affairs. By encourag-



ing private investment in the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish empires, as well as in the fledgling states of the Balkan peninsula, the French government endeavored to surround its only antagonist in Europe, Germany, with a ring of states dependent on France's financial support and therefore presumably amenable to her diplomatic influence.

Yet, in spite of this preoccupation with the German menace in Europe, France simultaneously embarked on a campaign of colonial expansion that left it in possession of the world's second largest empire by the end of the nineteenth century. Historians of French imperialism have sought to explain this paradox by emphasizing a motivating factor that does not lend itself to statistical confirmation in the manner of trade patterns or capital flows. This is the intangible phenomenon of the search for prestige. Abruptly displaced by Germany in 1871 as the dominant power on the European continent, France (according to this analysis) sought the psychological compensation of territorial conquest in distant regions of the non-European world where local authorities lacked the political organization and military power to offer effective resistance. By "France," in this instance, is meant not the government in Paris (which appears to have endorsed this colonial policy belatedly and somewhat reluctantly) but rather the military commanders and merchants on the spot who pursued their own particular interests. One observer went so far as to describe the French empire as having been built by "bored army officers looking for excitement." He might have added: "and by railroad builders and traders in search of quick profits."

In any event, by the end of the nineteenth century approximately a third of the continent of Africa, a large section of Southeast Asia (consolidated politically as "French Indochina"), and a few island chains in the South Pacific had been brought under French control. While Imperial Germany was busy consolidating its dominant position on the continent of Europe, France joined Great Britain in a scramble for control of much of the rest of the non-European world. It is not surprising that French imperialism had received the amiable encouragement of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the architect of his country's continental hegemony. It served to divert French attention from European concerns, particularly the unhealed wound to French national pride represented by the loss of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany after the Franco-Prussian War. It also increased the likelihood of tension between France and England in regard to overlapping colonial claims and therefore reduced the possibility of those two nations joining forces to oppose Germany in Europe.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, Britain and France were joined in this massive land grab by two other European states that sought to carve out for themselves a share of the remaining unclaimed territory of the non-Western world. The first of these was Germany itself. In the years following Bismarck's retirement in 1890, the impetuous young German Emperor, William II, grew increasingly dissatisfied with his erst-